KṚṢṆADATTA MAITHILA AND HIS WORKS*

By

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Mithilā, the land of Sanskrit scholars since the days of Janaka, has produced a galaxy of intellectuals in every branch of knowledge. Since the beginning of the 9th century A. D. there has been a regular and unrestricted flow of dramatic literature there and several works of eminence have been produced.[1] In the long list of dramatists, Kṛṣṇadatta is one of the loftiest names, who wrote two allegorical *Nāṭakas*. On a study of his works, it becomes clear that the writers of the history of Sanskrit literature have done scant justice with this reputed scholar.

I have been forced to take up the study of this author after going through the much advertised publication of one of his works, namely, *Purañjanacharita*,[2] by Miss Nilam Solanki, M. A., of Vittalbhai Patel Mahāvidyālaya, Gujerat. Miss Solanki claims to have produced an authoritative edition, but to my mind her claims are baseless. The publication, based as such, on a single manuscript, is defective. She has not gone through all available materials regarding the author and does not seem to have compared and collated it. Before proceeding to say any thing about the author and his works, I should like to point out the defects in the present edition and suggest an amended reading. Only with these amendments, suggested below, can a

*In preparation of this work, I have secured sufficient help from may erstwhile student, Sri Umakant Thakur, M. A., now Ph. D., Research Scholar, Mithila Institute, Darbhanga. Sri Thakur is bringing out a complete edition of the works of Kṛṣṇadatta Maithila.

1. Nānyadeva, the king of Mithila, (1097-1145), was one of the greatest writers on Dramaturgy.

2. *Purañjanacharita*—Edited by Miss Nilam Solanki, M.A., Charotar Book stall, Anand (W. R.), India, 1955. Vallabh Vidyanagar, series 30.

complete study of the work be presented. In her introduction,[1] she says, "The directory of Sri Rajendralal Mitra, mentions another copy of this drama, which I failed to get.........researched for another copy at several places in India, but was not successful ....He is supposed to have written a few books out of which *Prabodhachandrodaya* has become well known to the Sanskrit world."

A study of the text, in original, shows that she did not care to search for other available materials. She is insistent on the point that she did not get another copy and as such was obliged to edit on the basis of a single manuscript. I have come across another manuscript of the *Purañjanacharita*,[2] and on a perusal of the same, it appears that there are some variants in reading too. Any edition should have been done after collating a number of manuscripts for a correct reading of the text. The description of the manuscript, on which I have relied upon, is as follows. The manuscript, written in Maithilī character on white brown paper, is $11\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2{\cdot}8''$, and the lines on each page vary from 6 to 7 with about 58 letters in a line. There are twenty two pages (or Folios). Sanskrit and Prakrit have been used and at places there have been partial rendering of prakrit passages into Sanskrit. First and last folios are a little damaged, otherwise the manuscript is in a good state of preservation. In the following lines I shall bring out the differences occuring in the two,—that is, the *printed text* of Miss Solanki and the *manuscript*, on which I have relied upon.

(1) The last page of the manuscript does not tally with the printed text (i. e., प्रशस्ति)

(2) The manuscript, in question, is earlier than the printed text and is dated *Śaka* 1701 (=1779 A. D.). Solanki's text is dated *Saka* 1712 (=1790 A. D.). The date of the manuscript will be evident from the statement at the end of the work—

1. Solanki, *op. cit*, ii.

2. This manuscript is in the possession of Pandit Jivanand Thakur of Raj Library, Darbhanga. My reading of the text is based on this manuscript.

शाकेब्दे धरणी वियन्मुनिधरा संभासमाने शुभे
माघेमासि दिवामणौ मकरगे विष्णोस्तिथौ सादरम् ॥
श्री मन्मातुल कृष्णदत्त कृतिना यन्निर्मितं नाटकं प्राणेख्या—
तदिदं सदा द्रुततरं श्री हेमनाथ द्विजः............."

Here we have to bear in mind that in Mitra's *Notices*,[1] the manuscript is dated *Śaka*, 1701.

The difference in reading is indicated below:—

Miss Solanki's printed edition	*Manuscript* (referred to by me)
(a) P. 3—Para 1	slightly different reading here, but no change in meaning.
(b) P. 6—Verse 15 begins with युवासुवासा——	It begins as follows— गुणी समर्थः खलु कृत्यकर्मसु युवासुवासा,... (Folio 4B)
(c) P. 10—Act II—after निष्क्रान्ता, line 16 and before प्रवेशकः on P. 11	The text between these two portions is not found in the manuscript.
(d) P. 11—Act II from line 15 वृत्तिमतिका to पञ्चप्रस्थवनं at the end of the page	The portion is not found in the manuscript.
(e) P. 12—Verse 8, line 3 स्नेहेन प्रश्न,	This is verse 7 of the *mss.* and slight change in reading is संस्नाप्य स्नेह नीरैः
(f) P. 13— राजा—बाढ़म्,	तदुतिष्ठं
(g) P. 15—line 10—राजा—देवि पथद्वयमुपतिष्ठते last line in the same page	राजा—सन्दिहान इव तिष्ठति। it is not in the *mss.*
(h) P. 19—Act III, line 5 सवार्थंपूर्णस्य	सवार्थं सिद्धस्य

1. R. L. Mitra—*Notices* VI, p. 20, *Mss.* No 2000.

lines 13 and 14 — Order changed in the *mss*, i. e. 4th line is 3rd and 3rd line is 4th with minor change in the reading, e. g. चहसन्त्यां, instead of विहसन्त्या।

at the end of the same page — There is निष्क्रान्तौ, in the *mss*.

(i) P. 20—line 4 नृपालोकिता — नृपालोचितो

(j) P. 24—line 25— In the statement of अविज्ञान, there is no ततस्ततः in the *mss*. Verse 9 of the *mss*. between अविज्ञान and विलक्षण is missing in the printed text. —

Verse 9

रक्ताक्षोमलिनः पिको मधुरयावाचा
वरं श्लाघ्यतेऽ
मेध्यासी कटुभाषणोऽपि सुकृताख्यानेन
काकोच्यते।
सुश्लाघ्यो नवलक्षणाप्रणयनादत्यन्त
दुष्टोऽप्यसा—
वेकः कोऽपि गुणो विलक्षणतरः
स्यात् सर्वदोषापहः ॥९॥

Then comes ततस्ततः, (Folio-16 B) in the *mss*.

(k) P. 26—lines 1 and 6— — there is मालव — गुर्जरानाम्

(l) P. 30—between lines 13 and 14, few sentence are missing here—— — More lines are in the *mss*. (Folio—19A)

नवलक्षणा–सेयं गोस्वामिनः परमासक्तिः
वैदर्भी–आर्ये तं द्रष्टुमिच्छामि
नवलक्षणा–इदानीमेव द्रक्ष्यसि
वैदर्भी–तत्र त्वरते मे चेतो वृत्तिः

Line 20, a slight change in reading — तदादेशय पन्थानम्

(m) P. 34, line 10, one line is missing from the printed text —

जय जय दशविधि रुप मुरारे मंगलमय
मधुसूदन माधव करुणाकरकलुषारे
(Folio 21 B)

These are some of the important variants of the two readings. They are important in so far as the correct reading

of the text is concerned. So long as a third manuscript is not discovered, the text, along with changes, suggested above, remains the standard basic work of that author. There are other points to be noticed with regard to the present text and its author. Miss Solanki has confused Kṛṣṇadatta Maithil with Kṛṣṇa miśra, author of the *Prabodhachandrodaya*. One may simply wonder at her amazing conclusions like the present one, as we know that these two authors were separated by more than seven centuries. Kṛṣṇamiśra flourished in the 11th Century A.D.,[1] while our author belonged to the late 17th or 18th Century A. D. She should have borne in mind that Kṛṣṇamiśra of the 11th century A. D. could not have been a contemporary of the Bhonslas. Solanki is also silent about another important work of Kṛṣṇdatta Maithila.

Kṛṣṇdatta was a well-known scholar of his time. He was the son of Saḍārāma and Ānanda Devi[2]. He hailed from one of the respectable families of Mithilā. Very little is known about him as is the case with other reputed scholars of the past. Even the author of the history of Tirhut, who has appended a long list of Sanskrit writers of Mithila, is silent on this point. Whether he confused our author with Kṛṣṇdatta Upādhyaya is not certain and can not be ascertained at this stage. There is no doubt that Kṛṣṇdatta Maithila had superb scholarly qualities. His genius attracted the notice of Devaji Purushottama, the prime minister of the Bhonslas of Nāgpur, who was probably his patron. Even the discerning eyes of late lamented Dr. K. P. Jayaswal failed to notice the importance of the *Puranjanacharita*.

1. A. B. Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, pp. 251 ff.
2. Krishnamachariar—*History of classical Sanskrita literature*, p. 661
3. S. N. Singh—*History of Tirhut*—(Calcutta-1922). He mentions one Kṛṣṇdatta Upadhyāya (p. 145) who is known for several works as *Gīta-Gopī-Pati* and *Chandrikācharita* and a commentary on Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*, called *Sasilekhā*. In *Gīta-Gopī-Pati*, Kṛṣṇdatta says—

"मैथिलकृष्ण भणित मिति माधव चरण युगलमुपनीतम् ।
सखि हे कृष्णमनुपम् भासम् ।"

It is not possible in the present state of our knowledge to identify this writer with the author of *Purañjanacharita*. Dr. J. K. Misra, in his *Ḥistoyr of Maithili literature* does not say anything about this author.

Jayaswal refers to one of his works, namely, *Kubalayāśvayiannāmanā-ṭakaṃ.*[1] The *Purañjanacharita* has also been noticed by a number of scholars in their reports.[2] *Kubalayāśva* was completed in Saka 1705 (=1783 A. D.). So, even the manuscript of his second drama, found in Mithilā, is earlier than the text used by Miss Solanki. Both these manuscripts show that Kṛṣṇdatta was a reputed author of the 18th Century.

Our author had the genius of writing allegorical drama and his style certainly reminds one of Kālidāsa, Bāṇa, Kṛṣṇamiśra and Jayadeva. The *Purañjanacharita* relates the story of Purañjana of the *Bhāgawatapurāṇa*, though a few new characters have been brought in. Following the footsteps of Kṛṣṇamiśra, our author here extols the cult of Bhakti through this drama, the object of which is to promote devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. In his description of the *Daśāvatāra* of Viṣṇu, one is reminded of the marvellous poetic style of Jayadeva. *Kublayāśva* is based on the story, found in the *Brahmapurāṅa*. Though an entertaining farce, this drama, in seven acts, relates the love of a vedic student and a maiden Madālasā and Sāndrakutuhala. These two works show that our author took his plots from the *Purāṇas*. A few lines from *Kublayaśva*, as noticed by Jayaswal in his *Catalogue*, are quoted below for reference.

Beginning:—ओं नमो गणेशाय ॥

भाल प्रज्ज्वलदक्षिकैतवसती विश्लेषवैश्वानर—
ज्वाला वर्त्तित सौर सैन्धवपयः फेनैक लेखेव या
या गौरी मिलने पुनः पुरजिता दध्रे स्वमौलौना
प्रस्र: पल्लवितस्य पुष्पकलिका सापातुतान्त्रीकला ॥
अपि च।

1. K. P. Jayaswal—*Descriptive Catalogues of Manuscript in Mithila*, Vol. II., p. II; काव्यग्रन्थानि—p. 33; No. 32. Two *mss.* of this work are known in Bihar—One deposited in the Bihar Research Society, Patna & the other in Raj Library, Darbhanga. Cf. Mitra-*Notices*—VI., p. 64.

2. C. C. I. 339; *Peterson's Reports—IV. XXI*; Schyuler-*Bibl.* 63; Mitra—*Notices—VI.* 20.

End:— आनन्दं प्राप्नुवन्ति प्रतिपदमतुलं स्वेष्टलाभेनलोकाः।
पृथ्वीन्द्राः यान्तु पृथ्वीं पृथुनय यशसः सस्य सम्पति पृथ्वीं
काले काले तड़ित्वानमृतरसः वृष्टिमिष्टां विधत्तां
श्रीविश्वेशप्रसादत्प्रचरतु परितः सत्कवेः सूक्तिरेषा।
भरतः एवमस्तु ।। इति निष्क्रान्ताः सर्वे ।।

Colophon:— ... .
शाके १७०५ मार्गशुक्लपञ्चदश्यां चन्द्रवासरे
मिश्रश्रीशुभनाथशर्मसुधियः शब्दागमेऽधीतिनः ।।
शीलाचार दयाविचार विनयाधारस्य संप्रीतये
श्रीकाश्यां परिपूर्यनाटकमिदं श्रीकृष्णदत्तोऽलिख
च्छब्दार्थस्खलनं कृताविह लिपौ वर्णच्युतिः शोध्यताम् ।।

विषयः--मदालसाकुवलयाश्वयोश्चरित्रवर्णनम् ।

We have the following quotations from Mitra's Notices-VI-*Mss* No. 2035[1]—

विषयः-प्रथमांके-	काशीराज	आरुह्यतमनुससार-
द्वितीयांके-	समिदाहरणाय	निष्क्रान्तइति
तृतीयांके-	मन्दारिका	परिणयवर्णनञ्च
चतुर्थांके-	पुण्यंशीलस्य	वर्णनञ्च
पच्चमांके-	देवब्राह्मण	सूचना
पष्ठयांके-	पातलके तुसहोदरस्य	प्रवेशकथनं
सप्तामांके-	नागकुमार	महोत्सववर्णनञ्च.

The story, in brief, is that a vedic student Kabalayāśva fell in love with a maiden named Madālasā. The maiden is carried away to the nether regions, whence she is rescued by a king of Kāśī and restored to her lover.

The Raj Library *Mss* of this nāṭaka is written in Devanāgarī character and is in a book form on a Foolscap paper. The size is 13·2″×8·5″. Though the appearance is not very old, the last page is wretched. It seems to have been copied from another manuscript. The lauguage is both Sanskrit and prakrit.

1. Place of deposit—Pandit Harshanath Jha—Sardapur, Ujana, P. O. Madhepur (Darbhanga).

There is some difference here, when comdared with Jayaswal's and Mitra's *Catalogue* and *notices* respectively.

Beginning:—ऊँ नमो महिषा मर्द्दिन्यै—

× × ×

नान्ध्यते सूत्रधारः ॥२॥

अलमति विस्तरेण। पुरोऽवलोक्य।

End:—(in the IVth act—This shows that this *mss.* is incomplete).

राजा–द्वितीयं पुनरिदमाशङ्का स्थानं दिवता

पूजामामना सङ्गोमनो प्रश्नस्तिश्च किञ्चिद

निमितं सूचयति तदस्य प्रतिशाति किं..

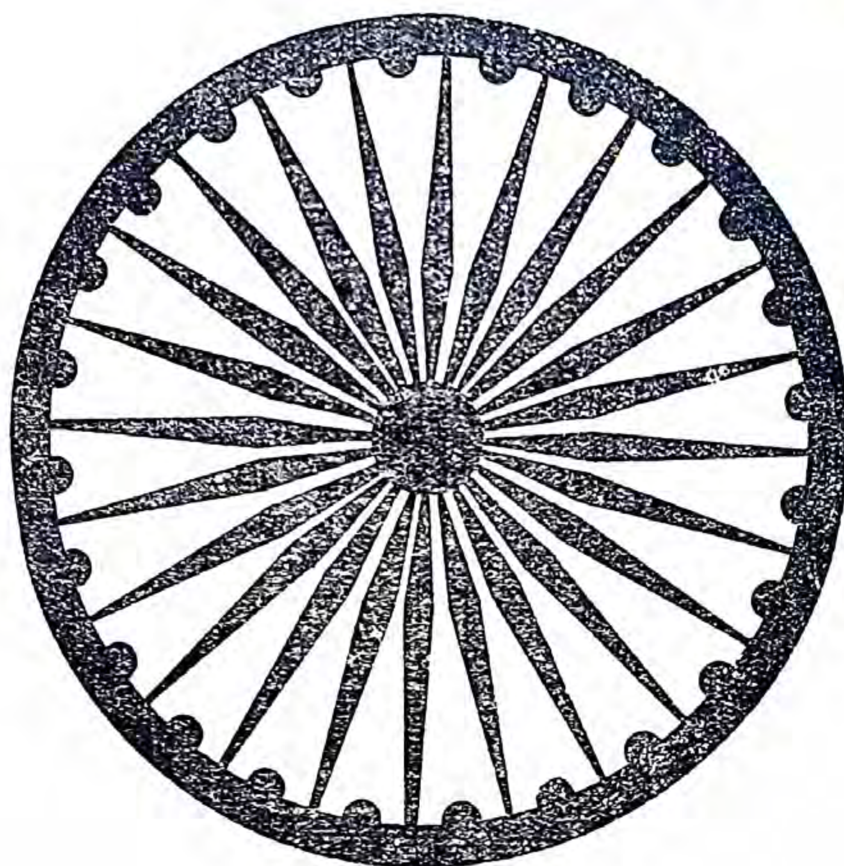
.....मित्युदारति सन्तस्तकी यन्तां हय हरित हेमधेनु

The writer Kṛṣṇadattakavi is mentioned in the Drama.

A critical edition of this drama, on the basis of all available *mss.*, will be an invaluable addition to the store house of Sanskrit literature. From the study of above facts about a particular author in the 18th Century, it appears that classical Sanskrit still inspired the writers in so late a period and held the field. The unbroken continuity of Sanskrit literature is well-illustrated by these facts. Many more Sanskrit dramatists are awaiting spade work at the hands of scholars.

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